

Conducting Serious Incident Investigations

Course Outline

I. THE INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS

OBJECTIVE: *The purpose of this chapter is to define important concepts relating to investigations and to explain the manner in which they interact to produce a valid conclusion.*

- a. What are Facts?
- b. What is Evidence?
- c. Evidence and Findings of Fact

Summary

II. ORGANIZING AN INVESTIGATION

OBJECTIVE: *The purpose of this chapter is to identify the need for speed when conducting investigations since delay can affect the amount and quality of available information. The chapter ends by describing the way in which an investigation should be organized, including its relationship to police inquiries of the same matter.*

- a. The Volatile Half-life of Evidence
- b. Assigning Responsibility
- c. Investigatory Questions
- d. Early Stages of the Investigation
- e. Order of Witness Interviews
- f. Relationship to Criminal Investigations

Summary

III. PHYSICAL AND DEMONSTRATIVE EVIDENCE

OBJECTIVE: *The purpose of this chapter is to describe the steps investigators should take in the collection and preservation of physical evidence, including the securing of the scene and other steps necessary in establishing the chain of custody.*

- a. Injuries
- b. Locations at which Incidents Occur
- c. Substances and Objects

Summary

IV. TESTIMONIAL EVIDENCE

OBJECTIVE: *The purpose of this chapter is to help investigators first identify, then successfully interview witnesses. The chapter includes information on both the nature of the questions an investigator asks as well as his or her demeanor, appropriate responses to witnesses who are reluctant, those requiring union representation and additional issues regarding hearsay, incompetence and opinion testimony.*

- a. Types of Interviews
- b. Identifying Witnesses
- c. Preparing for an Interview
- d. Conducting the Interview: Demeanor
- e. Questioning the Witness
- f. Interviewing Uncooperative Witnesses
- g. Interviewing Individual Receiving Services
- h. The Right to Representation
- i. Additional Issues: Incompetence, Opinion, Hearsay

Summary

V. SLICING THE BOLOGNA

OBJECTIVE: *The purpose of this chapter is to help investigators learn to conduct their interviews in a detailed and organized manner.*

- a. Beginning the Questioning
- b. Helping the Witness Remember Details
- c. Using a Diagram
- d. Common Errors When Slicing the Bologna

Summary

VI. DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

OBJECTIVE: *The purpose of this chapter is to describe correct methods for recording a witness' statement. In addition, the chapter will deal with the identification and collection of other documentary evidence.*

- a. Taking Statements
- b. Special Problems in Taking Statements
- c. Collecting Business Records

Summary

VII. DRAWING CONCLUSIONS AND REPORTING INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS

OBJECTIVE: *The purpose of this chapter is to provide investigators with insight in the analysis of their findings, and provide a format for the presentation of written reports of their work.*

- a. Evaluating Evidence
- b. Writing Investigative Reports

Summary

EXERCISES

OBJECTIVE: *The purpose of these exercises is to give the reader an opportunity to apply the information presented.*

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| a. Difficult Problems | i. Interviewing Consumers |
| b. Investigation Questions | j. Organizing an Investigation |
| c. Understanding Evidence | k. Physical and Demonstrative Evidence |
| d. Questions | l. Uncooperative Witnesses |
| e. Role Play #1 | m. Instructions |
| f. Structure of an Incident Interview | |
| g. Some Follow-Up Questions When Slicing the Bologna | |
| h. Role Play #2 | |